

Now, under the threat of U.S. action, Hussein agrees to let weapons inspectors back into his country. Can there be any doubt that the only thing this man responds to is the threat of deadly force? One is tempted to believe Hussein is now prepared to admit weapons inspectors. And indeed we should and must let that scenario play out before any act of war. But the skeptic in me doesn't believe a word that he says. History is a wonderful teacher and we all know this man's history.

The U.N. has shown itself to be incapable and unwilling to enforce its own resolutions. As a guarantor of world peace they have a checkered past at best. Without having the threat of military intervention, the U.N. is a paper tiger. I have long been a supporter of the U.N. I believe that the nations of the world must have a forum in which to settle their differences but when a tyrant like Hussein thumbs his nose at the world, something isn't right.

One last point, since the 9/11 attack on our country we have been pouring over the coals, literally and figuratively. One by one we have connected the dots that led to the attack. We have seen the threat that connects the plans to do great harm to our country and our people.

The President in these past weeks has connected the dots for us. He has pointed to Iraq with great alarm and tried to help us to understand the threat. It is real. What we don't know is how imminent and what shape the threat will take.

After much thought and prayer and consultation with my constituents and with people I love and trust, I have decided to support the resolution before the House. Not because I want to go to war. I don't, I remember the last one. I remember meeting with Marsha Connor, the mother of Patrick Connor of Marcellus who was killed in action. It was heartbreaking.

But if we don't give the President that option, Saddam Hussein and Iraq will continue to grow more troublesome and if they ever develop a nuclear weapon it would be horrific. I'll vote for the resolution but I will implore the President not to use force unless all else fails. Negotiation, weapons inspectors, and U.N. sanctions should come first.

And if we do indeed go, we should do so with the other nations of the world who should feel as threatened as we.

Mrs. MCCARTHY of New York. Mr. Speaker, I rise in support of House Joint Resolution 114 and the need to protect the United States from any threat posed by Iraq. However, my support for the resolution is coupled with several concerns associated with potential unilateral action against Iraq.

The September 11 attacks on the United States demonstrated the will of misguided, vengeful leaders whose determination to harm Americans seem boundless. Clearly, Saddam Hussein is one of these leaders. This dictator harbors terrorists, invokes chemical warfare upon his own people and openly defies United Nations Security Council Resolutions. His support of international terrorism, and pursuit of stockpiling weapons of mass destruction poses not only a threat to the United States, but also to the world.

Since 1998, this body has voted on four separate measures that appropriate funds for Iraqi opposition forces, as well as call upon Iraq to allow U.N. inspectors immediate, unconditional and unrestricted access to areas

they wish to inspect. Today's resolution takes a step further and acknowledges that sanctions, weapons inspection and containment have failed. It recognizes that Iraq and Saddam Hussein present an unrelenting hostility to the United States. And we know when it comes to the United States, Hussein has a very prolific partner in hate: al Qaeda. In fact, Saddam Hussein has openly praised the September 11 attacks.

The resolution before us authorizes United States military force under two circumstances: (1) In order to defend our national security against a threat by Iraq, and (2) enforce U.N. Security Council Resolutions relevant to Iraq.

Disarming Iraq is necessary to ensure our national security. I was encouraged to hear President Bush emphasize that Iraq can avoid military force if all weapons of mass destruction are destroyed. I hope that Saddam Hussein will heed this advice.

I was also encouraged to hear President Bush stress the importance of seeking a coalition, as I believe the support of the United Nations Security Council is critical. The President must persist in his efforts with the U.N. to approve a tougher inspection resolution. If inspection efforts fail, a U.N.-sanctioned military force is the best course of action, as it would garner support in neighboring countries, and enhance the chances of post-war success. If the U.N. were to fail to authorize force, then the President should come back to Congress and let us have a say about whether we go in unilaterally.

Finally, I was glad to hear the President pledge to rebuild a post-war Iraqi economy. This is very important, as the cost of military action must not only be weighed economically, but regionally.

Although this is one of the most difficult votes a Member of Congress will cast, I'm afraid it is an inevitable action needed to protect the United States from Iraq and the destructive weapons it seeks to acquire and use.

Today, each and every member will vote their conscience. Regardless of how we each vote, at the end of the day we must remember one thing: that we represent the people of the United States and we must come together as a body, and a people, just as we did on September 11.

Mr. SERRANO. Mr. Speaker, today I find myself standing here on the floor of the House with anguish in my heart. I have read and listened to all sides, and I have struggled to understand why our great nation would want to contemplate going to war.

When September 11th, 2001, happened, I was in New York City, and as the enormity of what terrorism could do to my City hit me, I was stunned. Then I wept for all of those innocent people who were simply doing their jobs and living their lives, who in one moment of hate lost their lives. There has, however, not been any conclusive evidence that links al Qaeda, those responsible for the tragedy of September 11th, with Iraq.

Some question whether those who oppose this resolution are forgetting those who died on September 11th; some question our patriotism. Though I should not have to affirm my patriotism, I say simply that I love my country, I love my city of New York, and I am not afraid to deal with those who attacked it. It is the most basic of our purposes as a national government, to defend our nation. But here we speak of a different matter.

I am certainly pleased that the President now recognizes that he must secure the approval of the Congress before taking our nation to war. This is progress and what our Constitution requires. However, if our ultimate goal is to disarm Iraq of all chemical and biological weapons, how does giving our President this right to go to war accomplish that goal? Wouldn't working with the United Nations to implement a program of rigorous inspections move us closer to our goal? I believe that force should always be used as a last resort, and never as the first way to accomplish a goal.

The new doctrine announced by the President, that the United States has the right to engage in a preemptive strike, which he seeks to implement through this resolution, frightens me and establishes a troubling precedent. This is a doctrine better left unused. It contravenes a half century of developed international law, of which the United States has been a champion. Taking this idea to its logical conclusion means that India and Pakistan, for instance, nations with nuclear weapons and a history of conflict, may no longer feel bound by the limitations on the use of force that have been agreed to by the family of nations. The United Nations will become irrelevant and the checks and balances that membership in the United Nations places on the member states will no longer apply. Even if we strike and successfully defeat Iraq militarily, will this make our nation a safer place to live?

The Bush Administration often talks about "regime change" in Iraq and the need to remove Saddam Hussein from power. In 1991 we decided against regime change because of concern about the overall stability of the region. What has happened since that time that has changed the goals of a military action?

As a nation we need to plan and think beyond what passage of this resolution and a military victory would mean. The United States would need to spend at least the next ten years involved in an occupation, reconstruction, and re-building effort. This will require a serious commitment of American resources and troops. Are we ready to commit to the rebuilding that will follow military action?

As a nation have we carefully considered what the impact of a unilateral attack by the United States would be on Israel? If everything that has been attributed to Hussein this evening is true, are we prepared to guarantee the stability of the entire region when Hussein finds himself threatened and decides to strike out at his neighbors?

Our State Department is actively involved in trying to improve the image of the United States in the Arab world and particularly among young Arab men and women. We do not want them to perceive the United States as an enemy. When we engage as a nation in a unilateral military action against an Arab nation, an action that our allies are cautioning against, how will the United States be viewed in the Arab world? Perhaps the result will be an increase in al Qaeda's membership and a renewed hatred toward Americans.

The United States is founded on the principles of justice and due process. If we disregard these principles and adopt a unilateral, macho and aggressive stance, we lose our moral authority in the world. Seeking the consensus of nations does not weaken us or expose us to danger; instead, it fortifies us and brings to our cause the strength of our allies.